








OBJECTIVE	TARGET	PROGRESS	PLAN STATUS	
			2008-2010	2011-2018
A. Maintain the size of all viable populations known to be remaining in the county in 2013.	ongoing	In 2005 it seemed that the water vole would become extinct in the sub-region but with the encouragement of habitat improvement and a higher level of mink control, the species has made a substantial recovery. We are now bucking the national trend in both size and range. Some urban sites have been lost but this has been more than compensated for by an increase in range on the Coventry and Oxford canals.	↓	↑
B. Increase population size and range by encouraging the expansion of existing populations in the county.	ongoing		↓	↑
Key to status: 2010: ↑ Any improvement ↔ No change ↓ Decline 2018: ↑ Good progress ↑ Some progress ↔ No change ↓ Decline				

PROPOSED ACTIONS for report	BY	REPORTED PROGRESS	NO.OF SITES/ ITEMS	TOTAL AREA/ LENGTH	ACTION STATUS
					↑↗↘↓
PL1. Where additional viable water vole populations are identified, ensure protection of sites through designation as LWSs.	ongoing	No progress. Habitat Biodiversity Audit (HBA): all potential sites with possible water voles are already listed.			↔
PL2. Designate the Ashby Canal as a LWS at the earliest possible opportunity as it is a site of regional importance connecting existing populations on the R. Anker and R. Sowe via the Hawkesbury and Marston canal junctions.	2014	Some progress. Warwickshire Wildlife Trust (WWT): this canal is a priority site for water voles as it is a site of regional importance, with the Marston and Hawkesbury junctions forming a hub connecting the R Anker/Wem Brook populations with the tributaries of the R Sowe / Withy Brook. Also linking the Oxford Canal's and the Coventry Canal's historic water vole sites which are now reoccupied and expanding. HBA: North Warwickshire Borough Council has agreed for a botanical LWS survey of this stretch in 2020; HBA will ask for information on water voles to add to the citation.			↑
PL3. Extend the existing pLWS at Long Marston to include connective waterways including ditches to facilitate dispersal of the Noleham Brook population.	2014	Some progress. HBA: has not been surveyed but HBA is looking at Long Marston Camp (aka Meon Vale) for 2019 which should include the connecting waterways. WWT: connective waterways will be created here, as a result of flood defence work and habitat improvement by EA / HoEF / WWT, allowing dispersal of the population on the Noleham Brook.			↑
PL4. Raise awareness of the HSE statutory rules and guidelines on the use of second-generation anticoagulant rodenticides by land managers including local authorities and homeowners.	ongoing	No progress. WWT: an unnecessary action and should be deleted.			↔
PL5. Respond to enquiries from parishes concerning the presence of water vole populations	ongoing	No progress.			↔

so that the information can be included in Neighbourhood Plans.		WWT: no Neighbourhood plans so far mention water voles and no parishes have enquired about them. Perhaps information should be sent out?			
SM1. Maintain existing populations of water voles on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coventry watercourses • Long Marston and Lower Quinton • River Anker • Ashby, Coventry and Oxford canals. 	ongoing	Progress in some areas. Numbers are down No change in numbers No change in numbers A big increase in numbers, including on tributaries of adjoining rivers.	3 areas		   
SM2. Ensure management agreements exist for all LWS designated in PL1.	ongoing	No progress with PL1.			
SM3. Consider the habitat requirements of water voles in site management plans, e.g. ditch bank management, including agri-environment schemes.	ongoing	In progress. Uptake of agri-environment scheme options benefiting water voles by improving the management of riparian / wetland habitats (2016): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EE9 - 6m buffer strips next to watercourse on arable 119.98ha • EE10 – 6m buffer strips next to watercourse on intensive grass 6.14ha • EJ9 – 12m buffers next to watercourses on arable 33.06ha • HJ9 – HLS 12m buffers next to watercourses on arable 0.99ha 		160.17ha	
SM4. Expand existing populations through the sympathetic management and restoration of adjacent habitat, targeting action to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • particular locations on Warwickshire /Leicestershire border in Nuneaton borough • Long Marston and Lower Quinton • River Anker • on Ashby, Coventry and Oxford canals around Hawkesbury and Marston junctions 	2020	In progress. Butterfly Conservation Warwickshire: connectivity of habitat at Marston Junction between the Coventry Canal and adjacent meadows was achieved in 2014. Friends of the Nook?: grant-aided work on paths, a noticeboard and a bridge in 2012 at the Nook, Bedworth , where enhancement by a community group to improve the 8ha site for water voles had taken place in 2005. WWT: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • at Brandon Marsh in 2011 a trial re-introduction was undertaken as part of a PhD dissertation organised by Middlemarch Environmental Ltd; the population did not survive, thought to be a result of predation by herons. • ‘Save Ratty’ project 2015-17: funded by a 2 yr. Heritage Lottery Fund grant, this project carried out the following work.- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ naturalised bank revetments on 20m of the Oxford Canal, adding new floating vegetation, attached to canal sides, for water voles to feed on, and to soften banks for them to climb up and aid connectivity between sub-populations. ▪ enhancement of 300m of stream banks with woody debris (to facilitate increased aquatic vegetation) and planting and seeding (for increased cover and food source), at Guphill Brook, Canley Brook and Lakeview Park, Coventry ▪ invasive species control (Himalayan balsam) over 1.1km at Longford Park, Lakeview Park, Canley Brook and Guphill Brook, Coventry, to allow native species to establish themselves which water voles can feed on. ▪ 1500m² of scrub management and desilting of 15m of channels at 	11 sites		

		<p>Longford Nature Park Community reed bed to create a mosaic of different habitat to benefit water vole all year round and provide deeper water for water voles and connectivity.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ sapling removal at Marston Junction and Wolvey Wetland to maintain lush wetland vegetation and preventing over-shading. ▪ 700m of coppicing at Wem Brook (Nuneaton), Longford Nature Park (Coventry) and Coventry and Oxford canals to create a mosaic of different habitat to benefit water vole all year round. ▪ 120m of hedgelaying at Marston Junction, Nuneaton, providing increased food production during autumn. 			
SM5. Continue and extend appropriate mink control programmes to protect existing water vole populations.	ongoing	<p>In progress.</p> <p>Partnerships such as Tame Valley Wetlands Partnership (and Wetlands West in the past) promote the conservation of water voles through improving public awareness and habitat improvement projects including developing mink control programmes.</p>			↑
SM6. Identify and create well-managed mink controlled areas on water courses containing suitable habitat for recolonisation by water voles in target areas (see SM4).	2020	<p>Some progress.</p> <p>WWT: although mink have been impacted by presence of otters, there are still records, including at Temple Balsall Nature Reserve in 2018-19, showing there is a need for mink control here.</p>	1 site		↑
SM7. Connect existing wetland corridors around the Hawkesbury and Marston junctions of the Ashby, Coventry and Oxford canals to encourage recolonisation by water voles in previous strongholds.	2020	<p>In progress.</p> <p>WWT: ‘ Save Ratty’ project 2015-17:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • coir roll installation, on 36m of the Oxford and Coventry canals, adding new floating vegetation, attached to canal sides, for water voles to feed on, and to soften banks for them to climb up and aid connectivity between sub-populations. • platform and coir roll installation on 48m at Marston Junction, adding new floating vegetation, attached to canal sides, for water voles to feed on, and to soften banks for them to climb up and aid connectivity between sub-populations. <p>Canal and River Trust (CRT): the connection of existing wetland corridors through the creation and enhancement of offside habitats, using coir rolls along hard banks, has been carried out along the Coventry and North Stratford canals.</p>	4 sites		↑
SM8. Trial the use of low-cost habitat improvements, especially on the hard engineered canal side.	2016	<p>In progress.</p> <p>WWT: ‘Save Ratty’ project 2015-17: carried out a trial of ‘motels’ (1.5m wide platforms giving mobile breeding habitat by providing cover and replicating natural burrows to aid juvenile water vole dispersal along brick/concrete banks) on 10m of the Oxford Canal.</p>	1 project		↑
RM1. Monitor remaining water vole populations on an annual basis.	2020	<p>Achieved.</p> <p>WWT:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the population at Lake View Park Coventry appears to be extinct despite enhancement of the habitat; perhaps a result of people and dogs. • in future, monitoring will not be carried out annually as the labour force for 			↑

		this is not available. 20 key sites will be identified and monitored on an opportunistic basis.			
RM2. Survey all sites with historic records from the last 10 years, every 3 years.	2015	No progress. WWT: not achieved due to lack of labour force and funding			↔
RM3. Monitor the effectiveness and success of habitat enhancement and mitigation works undertaken, especially low-cost habitat improvements on hard-engineered canal side.	2020	In progress. WWT/CRT: there seems no doubt that the increase in vole activity and records has been achieved by linking populations with motels. WWT: monitoring will be carried out at Hawkesbury and Marston junctions to see if the voles move into streams made accessible to them by ‘motels’ along the hard piling.			↑
RM4. Generate a digitised ‘Alert’ map re key water vole sites regarding management of watercourses, and in particular ditches, and circulate to the landowners.	2015	In progress. WWT: a GIS workspace has been created but records are still to be input.			↑
CP1. Recruit and retain key volunteers to undertake water vole surveys and organise annual water vole survey training.	ongoing	In progress. WWT: ‘Save Ratty’ project 2015-17: project staff, supported by 10 volunteers, carried out over 60 site surveys on 36 sites over the project’s 2 years. Survey data is being compiled into maps which show the water vole positive sites across the project area and then across the wider Coventry, Solihull and Warwickshire area. CRT: volunteers survey the offside banks of canals using canoes.			↑
CP2. Organise annual water vole survey training for volunteers and local land managers.	ongoing	In progress WWT: provides training and support to a volunteer network.			↑